Privatisation of ports and harbours

6. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether fishermen would be affected by privatisation of ports and harbours; and

(b) if so, how fishermen would be protected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Suicides by farmers

7. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of farmers have committed suicides in different parts of the country and more particularly in southern States;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that some bio-tech companies are accused of unfair trade practices leading to cotton growers on the verge of suicides; and

(d) if so, the action taken by Government to protect the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Cases of suicide by farmers have been mainly reported from the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala. Such instances have also been reported from the States of Punjab, Gujarat and Orissa. The main causes identified by the State Governments for committing suicide by farmers, *inter-alia,* include indebtedness, crops failure, non-payment of loan taken from private money lenders at high rate of interest.

(c) and (d) As per available information, farmers in certain districts of Andhra Pradesh have suffered losses on account of Bt. Cotton hybrid seeds of Mahyco. A few complaints have been received in the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission which is a quasi-judicial body, against Mehyco Monsanto Biotech Ltd., a biotech company involved in production and distributioin of Bt. cotton seeds.